

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Examiner withdrew claims 20, 21, 43, 53 and 54 from further consideration pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.142(b) as being drawn to a non-elected species. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the claims in view of the following remarks.

I. Petition to Delete Inventor

On January 22, 2001, Applicants' representative filed a petition to delete David Caplan as an inventor. Applicant did not receive confirmation from the Office regarding whether or not the petition was granted. Applicant respectfully requests that such confirmation be provided.

II. Election/Restrictions

Applicant acknowledges the withdrawal of claims 20, 21, 43, 53 and 54 from further consideration by the Examiner. Applicant reserves the right to reinstate these claims in the event the restriction requirement is withdrawn or overruled.

III. Claims Rejected Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Examiner rejects claims 15, 17, 19, 37, 40 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Deutsche patent no. DE 9313107 ('107'). Applicant respectfully traverse this rejection.

To anticipate a claim, every element of the claim must be disclosed within a single reference.

Applicant's claim 15 recites in part, "a first holder-engaging mechanism extending out from

said base with a slot located adjacent thereto; and a second holder-engaging mechanism extending out from said base having a distal end, which distal end is shaped in order to be received in said slot.”

With reference to Fig. 7b of ‘107, the Examiner asserts that the figure shows a base (24) having a male engaging mechanism (21), the male engaging mechanism including a slot opening, and a female engaging mechanism (23) having a distal end that is shaped to pass through the male engaging mechanism’s slot. Assuming for argument’s sake that the engaging mechanisms are analogous to those disclosed in Applicant’s claim 15 (which they are not), claim 15 recites that both engaging mechanisms extend out from the base. In ‘107, however, the male engaging mechanism (as defined by the Examiner) forms a recession or cavity in the base. Therefore, it cannot be said that the male engaging mechanism in ‘107 extends out from (i.e., away from) the base.

Thus, the present invention has a structure that is different from the prior art. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 15. Claims 17 and 19 depend from claim 15 and as such are patentable for at least the same reasons given in connection with claim 15.

Claim 37 recites in part, “a base having an inward and outward surface, said inward surface having a male coupling mechanism and a female coupling mechanism, said male and female coupling mechanisms extending inwardly from said inward surface.”

With reference to Fig. 7b of ‘107, the Examiner asserts that the figure shows a male engaging mechanism (21) with an “inwardly curved aperture” and an “outwardly extended” female engaging

mechanism (23). Thus, the male engaging mechanism (21) extends into the base (24) whereas the female engaging mechanism extends out from the base. Assuming for argument's sake that the engaging mechanisms are analogous to those disclosed in Applicant's claim 37 (which they are not), claim 37 requires that both mechanisms extend in the same direction (i.e., inwardly) from the same surface (i.e., the inward surface). In this regard, the Examiner has failed to show that: 1) the male and female engaging mechanisms (per the Examiner's definition) in '107 extend from a common surface; and 2) that the male and female engaging mechanisms in '107 extend from this surface in the same direction.

It is submitted that claim 37 is also allowable for the reasons given in connection with claim 15.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 37. Claims 40 and 41 depend from claim 37 and as such are patentable for at least the same reasons given in connection with claim 37.

IV. Claims Rejected Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Examiner rejects claims 18, 38, 39, 42, 44 and 45 under 37 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over '107 as applied to claims 15, 17, 19, 37, 40 and 41, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,464,091 to Callahan, et al. ("Callahan"). Applicant respectfully traverse this rejection.

A *prima facie* obviousness rejection requires the Examiner to show that the prior art alone or in combination teaches or suggests all elements of the claimed invention. Applicant respectfully

submits that the Examiner has failed to set forth a prima facie case of obviousness.

Claim 18 depends from independent claim 15. As argued above, the '107 reference does not teach or suggest "a first holder-engaging mechanism extending out from said base with a slot located adjacent thereto; and a second holder-engaging mechanism extending out from said base having a distal end, which distal end is shaped in order to be received in said slot," as recited in claim 15. Callahan fails to remedy the deficiencies in '107.

Accordingly, since claim 18 depends from claim 15, Applicant respectfully requests the withdraw of the rejection of claim 18.

Claim 38 depends from independent claim 37. As argued above, '107 fails to teach or suggest "a base having an inward and outward surface, said inward surface having a male coupling mechanism and a female coupling mechanism, said male and female coupling mechanisms extending inwardly from said inward surface," as recited in claim 37. Callahan fails to remedy the deficiencies in '107. Claims 38, 39, 42, 44 and 45 also depend from independent claim 37. As such, the rejected dependent claims are patentable for at least the reasons given in connection with claim 37.

The Examiner rejects claims 23, 50, and 52 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over '107 in view of Callahan as applied to claims 15 - 19, 37 - 42, 44, and 45, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 1,995,273 to Dohrwardt ("Dohrwardt"). Applicant respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 23 depends from independent claim 15. Neither '107 nor Callahan teach or suggest "a first holder-engaging mechanism extending out from said base with a slot located adjacent thereto;

and a second holder-engaging mechanism extending out from said base having a distal end, which distal end is shaped in order to be received in said slot,” as recited in claim 15. Dohrwardt fails remedy this deficiency.

The Examiner asserts that Dohrwardt discloses a holder having female (18) and male (17) holder-engaging mechanisms extending from a base (14), and wherein the male coupling mechanism has a slot (16) adjacent thereto. See Figs. 2 & 3 in Dohrwardt.

Assuming for argument’s sake that the engaging mechanisms in Dohrwardt are analogous to those disclosed in Applicant’s claim 15 (which they are not), claim 15 recites that both engaging mechanisms extend out from the base. In Dohrwardt, however, the male engaging mechanism (as defined by the Examiner) extends not from the base (14), but from the female (18) holder-engaging member. Hence, ‘107, Callahan and Dohrwardt fail to disclose all of the features of claim 15.

Accordingly, since claim 23 depends from claim 15, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of claim 23.

Independent claims 50 and 52 recite in part, “said female coupling mechanism is shaped and adapted to be seated in a groove between adjacent teeth on a sprocket.” Neither ‘107, Callahan and Dohrwardt teach or suggest this feature. In fact, the female (18) holder-engaging mechanism (as characterized by the Examiner) in Dohrwardt does not come in contact with the sprocket teeth (20). Rather, the sprocket teeth engage the space (19) at either end of the stretcher member (12). See Fig. 1 in Dohrwardt and accompanying text. Therefore, Dohrwardt teaches away from this feature of Applicant’s claims 50 and 52. In addition, as characterized by the Examiner, the female holder-

engagement member (23) in '107 is shaped and adapted to be seated in the male holder-engagement member (21) and therefore does not come into contact with a sprocket (if there was such a sprocket).

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 50 and 52.

The Examiner rejects claims 55 - 58 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over '107 in view of Callahan and Dohrwardt as applied to claims 15 - 19, 23, 37 - 42, 44, 45, 50 and 52, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 887,282 to Smith ("Smith").

Independent claims 55-58 recite in part, "said female coupling mechanism is shaped and adapted to be seated in a groove between adjacent teeth on a sprocket". However, as discussed above in regards to claims 50 and 52, neither '107, Callahan and Dohrwardt teach or suggest this feature. Furthermore, Smith fails to remedy the deficiency in '107, Callahan and Dohrwardt. The holder (21) in Smith has a surface (26) which comes into frictional contact with a wheel (14), not a sprocket. Furthermore, the Examiner has not shown that surface (26) in Smith is a holder coupling mechanism. But even if it were, it would still fail to be seated between adjacent teeth on a sprocket.

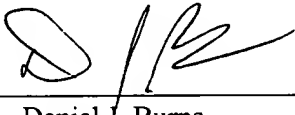
Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 56-58.

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The Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-1325 for any matter in connection with this response, including any fee for extension of time, which may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 8/5/03

By: 
Daniel J. Burns
Reg. No. 50,222

FLIESLER DUBB MEYER & LOVEJOY LLP
Four Embarcadero Center, Fourth Floor
San Francisco, California 94111-4156
Telephone: (415) 362-3800